

How to Flush Water Pipes in a Home

The Rushville City Utility has added a new chemical treatment to our system that went on line August __. As a result of the new system the utility water department has been flushing hydrants/mains that serves a dual benefit: to assure the new treatment has been dispersed throughout the entire city network, as well as to eliminate iron that settles in the lines (i.e. rusty water). Now that the city network is assured to contain the highest quality water, it is now time to focus on your residence.

To assure your home has the most current and rust free water, you will need to flush water pipes in your home.

The most common procedures for flushing your homes water system are as follows:

Flushing Cold Water Pipes

Step 1

Start on the second floor of the home (if applicable), or at the faucets furthest away from where your water main comes into the house. Work your way from the furthest to closest location. Turn on the cold water faucets one by one, each for one to two minutes, to flush cold water through the pipes.

Step 2

Test the water to be sure it is very cold. This is one way to know the water you are now getting through the faucet has not been sitting in your home's pipes.

Step 3

Continue this practice on the cold water side of all interior faucets.

Step 4

Don't forget to flush your toilets during this process

Step 5

Preform the same exercise at your exterior hose bibs (spigot).

Step 6

The water line leading to the refrigerator need to flushed also (ice maker and water dispenser).

Step 7

Additional appliances that are connected to water that will need to be part of the flushing process are the dishwasher and washing machine.

** These outline is general reference referencing the basic average home appliances and fixtures. The exact appliances and fixtures will need to be tailored to your specific home.

Flushing Hot Water Pipes

Step 1A – Physically flushing your hot water heater

Below is a DIY outline to flush the standard gas or electric water heater. When in doubt, please contact a professional licensed plumber.

Step 1B – Indirectly flushing your water heater through flow

Run the water for 15 minutes for a 40-gallon tank or 30 minutes for an 80-gallon tank. This should ensure all hot water currently in the hot water tank has been flushed and it will allow for fresh water to be heated. This is useful when there is discolored water.

Step 2

Same sequencing as cold water process-Start on the second floor of the home (if applicable), or at the faucets furthest away from where your water main comes into the house. Work your way from the furthest to closest location. Turn on the hot water faucets one by one, each for one to two minutes, to flush cold water through the pipes.

Step 3

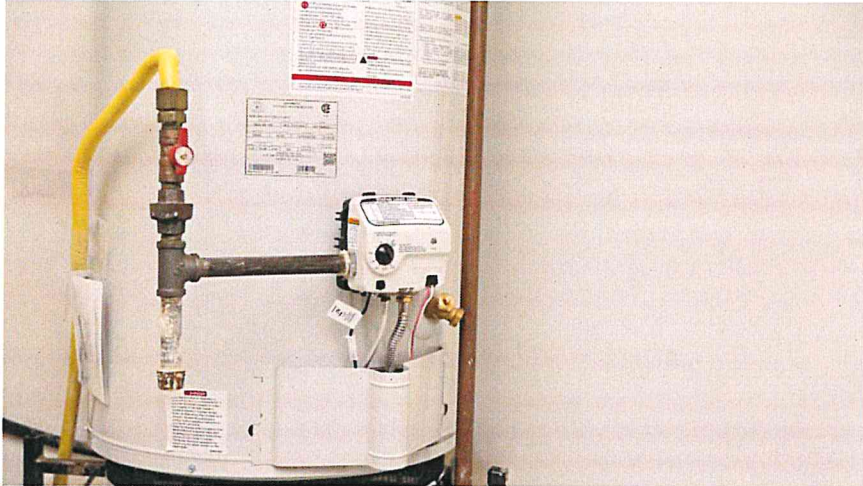
Continue this practice on the hot water side of all interior faucets.

Step 4

Turn on all other hot water faucets in the home including the washing machine, dishwasher, bathroom shower and bathroom sink to flush hot water through those as well. Let these run for a minute or two each to flush hot water lines completely.

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How to Drain and Flush a Water Heater



Tools needed to drain a water heater:

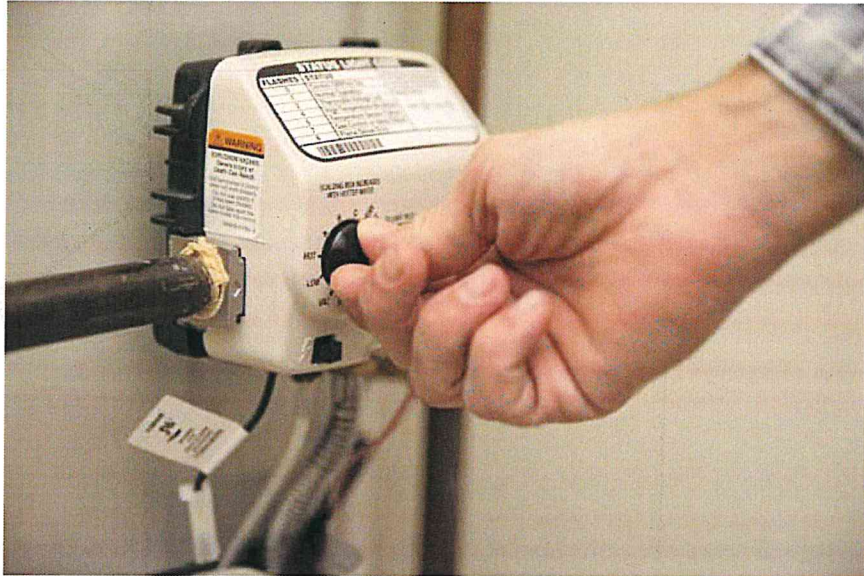
- Protective gloves
- Garden hose
- Flathead screwdriver
- Adjustable pliers (optional)
- 5-gallon bucket (optional)

Like a fading romance, are those long, hot showers getting shorter and less steamy? Chances are, your water heater is losing some of its potency. Before you work yourself into a lather, you may be able to restore at least some of its vigor with a DIY drain and flush.

Minerals like magnesium and calcium build up over time in your water heater, especially if you have hard water, and it can reduce its heating effectiveness. Drain and flush it at least once a year – fall is a good time – and you can extend the length of your water heater's useful life to avoid the cost of replacement.

Safety note: The water in your heater, and many of the pipes connected to your water heater, will be very HOT. Proceed with caution and protect yourself when inspecting your water heater.

1. Turn off gas or electricity



Always follow the manufacturer's instructions. If it's a gas heater, turn the gas control knob to the "Pilot" position. If it's electric, turn off the circuit breaker at the main breaker panel and disconnect the electrical power supply.

2. Shut off water supply



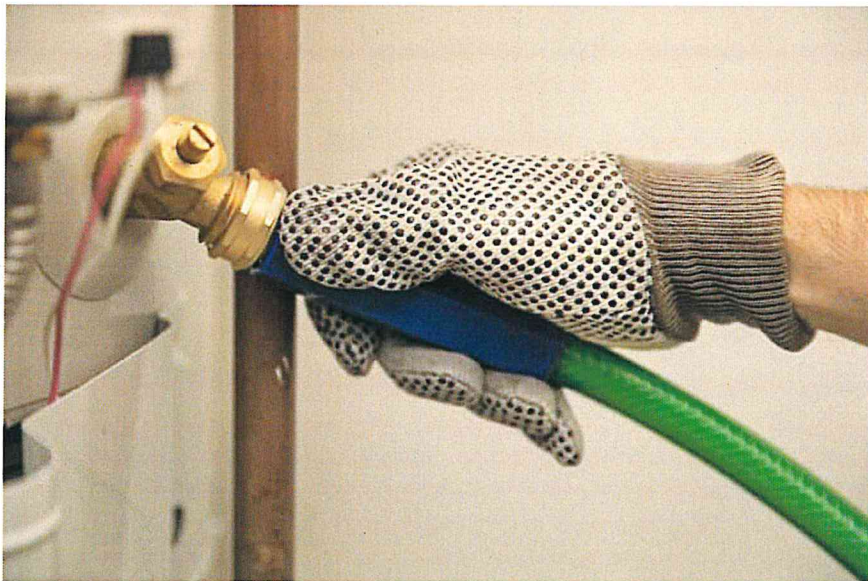
Close the cold water supply valve to the water heater. This usually involves manually turning the valve 90 degrees.

3. Turn on the hot water



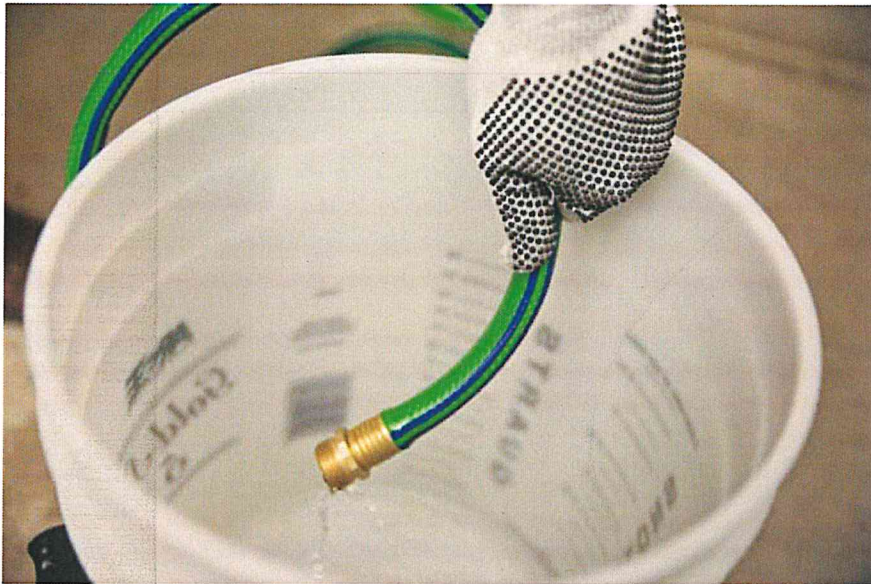
Turn on the hot water from a nearby faucet inside the house to prevent a vacuum from forming in the lines and flow air into the water heater, allowing it to drain easier. Leave the faucet on while draining the heater.

4. Hook up the hose



Put on your protective gloves. Attach a hose to the drain valve and run the hose to a drain, driveway or empty bucket. If you notice leaks at the connection, use adjustable pliers to tighten the hose. If the water heater is in the basement, it will likely require a manual pump connected to the hose - with a separate hose running from the pump to the drain or bucket.

5. Drain the water heater tank



Open the drain valve (which may require loosening the valve with a flathead screwdriver) and allow the water to flow until it stops. If using a 5-gallon bucket, be prepared to empty it frequently.

Caution! Unless you allow your water heater to sufficiently cool down, the water can be very hot.

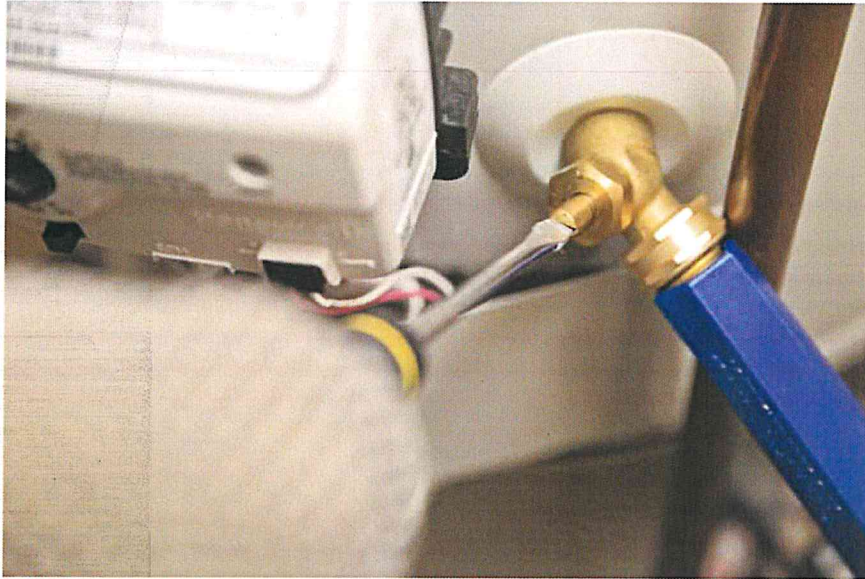
6. Flush the tank



Next, flush any remaining sediment from the tank by reopening the cold water supply valve. Opening and closing it several times can help stir up lingering sediment.

Caution! Water will flow out at a rapid rate when you reopen the water supply. Be prepared!

7. Close the water heater tank drain valve



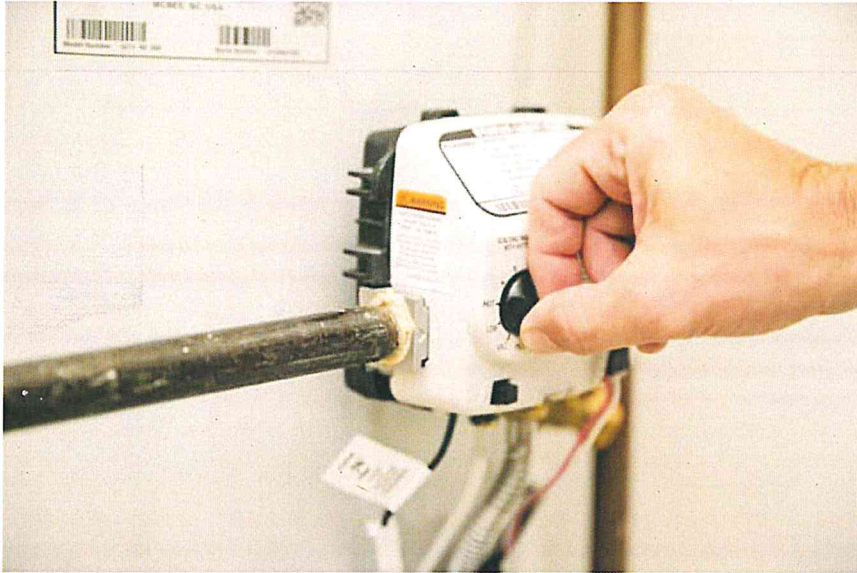
Once the water runs clear and you no longer see sediment coming from hose, disconnect the hose and close (tighten) the tank drain valve.

8. Fill the water heater tank



Open the cold water supply valve. Turn on hot water faucets on all fixtures and run to remove air bubbles. Turn off each hot water spigot once the water resumes normal flow

9. Power up the water heater



Follow the manufacturer's lighting instructions to relight your heater. These are often found both in the owner's manual and on the heater itself. Be sure to fill the heater with water before turning back on the electrical and gas connections, or risk damaging the heating element.

When in doubt, contact a professional licensed plumber.